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OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 14 March 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Kazakstan and Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint statement on issues relating to the Caspian Sea, signed by the Presidents of the Republics of Kazakstan and Turkmenistan in Almaty on 27 February 1997.

We should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 39, 99, 100 and 101 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) A. ARYSTANBEKOVA
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kazakstan
to the United Nations

(Signed) A. ATAEVA
Permanent Representative
of Turkmenistan
to the United Nations

* A/52/50.

ANNEX

Joint statement on issues relating to the Caspian Sea, signed by the Presidents of Kazakstan and Turkmenistan in Almaty on 27 February 1997

The President of the Republic of Kazakstan, N. A. Nazarbaev, and the President of Turkmenistan, S. A. Niyazov, having discussed issues relating to the legal status of the Caspian Sea and cooperation between Caspian States in Almaty on 27 February 1997, have reached the following mutual understanding.

1. The parties consider that the elaboration and conclusion of a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea is an urgent priority task. Until the Caspian States reach an agreement on the status of the Caspian Sea, the parties will adhere to the delimitation of administrative and territorial borders along a line running through the middle of the Sea.

2. As the basic instrument on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, the convention should define the limits of jurisdiction of the Caspian States on the basis of respect for their sovereign rights in the Caspian Sea and should also include principles and norms which will serve as a basis for regulating the protection and rational use of the natural environment, including the exploitation of the Sea's biological resources, the mineral resources of the seabed, navigation, and measures to overcome the adverse consequences of changes in sea level and other issues relating to activities on the Caspian Sea.

3. Agreements on separate aspects of activities on the Caspian Sea will be concluded on the basis of the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

4. The parties agree that the activities of the coastal States of the Caspian Sea should be performed on the basis of the following principles:

(a) The Caspian States shall comply in their relations with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality of States and the non-use of force or the threat of its use;

(b) The use of the Caspian Sea for exclusively peaceful purposes and its demilitarization;

(c) The maintenance of the Caspian Sea as a zone of peace, good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation and the resolution of all issues relating to the Caspian Sea by peaceful means;

(d) Protection of the natural environment and prevention of the pollution of the Caspian Sea;

(e) The preservation, reproduction and rational exploitation of the biological resources of the Caspian Sea;

(f) The responsibility of the Caspian States for damage to the natural environment and to each other as a result of activities relating to the use of the Caspian Sea and the development of its resources;

(g) The freedom and safety of the merchant shipping of Caspian States; and

(h) Compliance with other principles agreed between coastal States.

5. The parties agree that only vessels of the coastal States may navigate regularly on the Caspian Sea. Shipping rules and conditions and the procedure for ensuring the safety of shipping will be regulated by a separate agreement.

6. The parties will take the necessary coordinated measures to preserve the biological diversity of the Caspian Sea and rationally exploit and reproduce its biological resources and declare their readiness to cooperate to this end.

The parties recognize that within agreed zones each Caspian State has the right to reserve the development of biological resources for its own natural and/or juridical persons.

7. The parties recognize each other's right and the right of each coastal State to carry out work to develop the mineral resources of the Caspian seabed and will exchange specific proposals on the development of mutually advantageous cooperation, including geophysical and geological-prospecting work and the development of hydrocarbon deposits, taking account of the parties' experience and capabilities.

8. The parties are in favour of speeding up negotiations between coastal States and reaching a mutually acceptable understanding on the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

They are convinced that defining the legal status of the Caspian Sea will promote cooperation between them on the basis of equality and mutual advantage and help to attract investment and modern technologies with a view to exploiting the natural resources of the Caspian efficiently, rationally and safely.

For the Republic of Kazakstan

(Signed) Nursultan NAZARBAEV
President of the Republic of Kazakstan

For the Republic of Turkmenistan

(Signed) Sapamurat NIYAZOV
President of Turkmenistan